



## Dear Parents

We would like to welcome you to the Kindergarten Department at Gems Saudi International School. We are looking forward to an exciting year of new experiences and lots of fun!

Going to school is one of the most important experiences in a child's life. School is an exciting place where children meet new and different people and participate in many new and different experiences. We promise to work diligently to provide the children with wonderful experiences that help them to feel good about themselves and their school.

It is during the first years of life that children form attitudes about themselves, others, learning, and the environment. These attitudes last a lifetime, so we work very hard to find ways to help children develop positive attitudes. Educating a child is most successful when families and schools work together in the best interest of the child.

We welcome your input and assistance in educating your child; after all, you are your child's first teacher! Valuing education and the opportunities it provides are important first steps. We are hopeful that you will find time to participate in some of our school activities. The goal of our program is to meet your child's needs not only intellectually, but also physically, socially, and emotionally.

This Kindergarten Handbook has been developed to guide you and help you get acquainted with the major components of our program. You will receive weekly newsletters highlighting important news and events taking place within the department throughout the academic year. You will also get the chance to see your child interacting and performing during assemblies, class parties, and other celebrations.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries or concerns related to your child's education.

**Yours sincerely**  
**Kindergarten Department**





## **The Kindergarten Department Philosophy**

GSIS offers the Transitional Kindergarten Program, which offers children and families engaging learning environments that are designed to meet the social–emotional and cognitive needs of young students. The model is proactive in nature and requires teachers to consider curriculum and teaching strategies that promote learning through multiple lenses.

TK teachers will consider the individual interest levels and learning modalities of each student to ensure involvement in each lesson.

Our aim is to assist your child to learn and grow through experiences with play. There are many types of activities offered inside and outside the classrooms including puzzles, dramatic play, blocks, books, play dough, collage...etc. and as your child interacts and manipulates the play materials, he/she is learning about so many things.

For example, to name a few, each time children build with blocks, they are learning about concepts such as color, size, shape, balance, and design. When children dress up and play in the role play corner, they are experiencing and imitating the things they have seen and are familiar with at home. Meanwhile, they are extending their vocabulary, vocalizing their experiences, and communicating with words and actions in both languages, Arabic and English, equally.

We are dedicated to educating bilingual students that learn English and Arabic equally. All the classrooms have fully equipped learning centers; we use this approach as learning centers give children the opportunity to explore, discover, and take responsibility for selecting and completing a variety of activities. Students are encouraged to make smart choices. Furthermore, this gives the teachers the opportunity to focus on and assess students in groups, while others are busy doing structured activities related to what has been introduced. KG and G1 students also have the opportunity to observe, investigate, compare, analyze, plan, build, collaborate, and reflect during Project-Based Learning. PBL integrates students' knowledge and skills and helps extend their learning by relating it to real-life experiences. Two co-teachers of the same subject will be supervising the students during their subject lessons.

Children in kindergarten need to play in order to learn. It is the teachers' role to provide experiences for play, and to guide and assist every child into becoming an independent, creative person with a love for learning.

As we at Gems Saudi International School strongly believe in nurturing our culture and religion, we will focus on Arabic and Islamic Studies.

### **What do children learn in Kindergarten?**

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. It is the time when children begin to develop independence, initiative, decision-making ability, creativity, early literacy and numeracy skills, the ability to learn, the ability to relate to others, verbal communication skills, and feelings of self-worth. What young children learn at this stage will have a major impact on successful learning experiences in school, on personal development and on future participation in society.

### **Our Kindergarten Program includes the following:**

- Early Literacy in both languages, Arabic and English
- Early Numeracy and Science
- Holy Quran
- Citizenship and Community Awareness
- Personal and Social Responsibility
- Physical Skills and Well-being
- Technology Skills
- Social Emotional Learning

The learning areas focus on the early learning in English and Arabic language arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health and Life Skills, and Fine Arts. They provide a transition to the subject area expectations of elementary schooling. Early learning in information and communication technology is also included.



## **Assessment in Kindergarten**

Assessment is a natural, ongoing and important part of daily learning. By questioning and talking to children, listening to the language they use, observing and noting their behavior and progress, teachers gain information about children's levels of skill and understanding.

The teacher then keeps notes and uses her Daily Planner to record **observations**. The teacher looks not only at the children's work but also at the skills and strategies that children use. By observing children many times in different situations, the teacher is better able to build a more complete assessment of their learning.

**Progress Skills Reports** are completed by the teachers. These reports are correlated with the Common Core State Standards; teachers use their class observations to record students' progress and growth academically and socially.

**Portfolios of children's work** are selected and compiled over the year. A portfolio, containing such items as artwork, journals, samples of work, photographs, provides a meaningful picture of the child's progress throughout the year and is kept in your child's classroom. This portfolio will be passed on to the next academic year to give a clearer view of what the child has achieved and build upon it. Portfolios can be observed during parent-teacher conferences but will not be handed to parents unless the child is transferred to another school.

Children demonstrate their learning in appropriate and practical ways in an encouraging and supportive environment. They show their disposition for learning through their curiosity and persistence in learning activities, their ability to adapt to new situations, and their contribution to group activities.

Information that the teacher gathers about each child is used in several ways. This information helps the teacher plan the learning environment and match learning activities to learning needs. The teacher is then able to provide ongoing feedback to children to help them recognize what they know and are able to do, and to focus their efforts on more challenging activities.

Through oral or written reports, parent evenings, classroom visits and conferences that are going to take place, teachers and parents can exchange ideas and information, and parents can learn more about their children's progress and achievements.

## **Helpful Reminders**

Before your child comes to school, please make sure he/she has had a good breakfast and plenty of rest (ten to twelve hours of sleep is recommended for this age).

**Snack Program:** Please send **healthy** snacks with your child **each day**. **No soda or candy, PLEASE!** We have found the following items to be popular with our students: raw vegetables, cheese and crackers, fruit (cut into sections), and beverages (water, milk, additives & sugar free juices). Also, remember not to send glass bottled juices. Snacks **should not** require adult assistance or preparation. Children will be provided time to eat their snack in a relaxed social setting. **Do** pack enough food for two snack times, including drinks. **WE ARE A NUTS FREE SCHOOL**

**Pack a change of clothes:** (clearly labelled with your child's name) even if your child can go to the toilet by themselves, there may be times when accidents occur. There could also be times when the children are playing with water, paint, wet sand etc. and a change of clothes will make your child more comfortable.

**Label:** Please label your child's uniform, sweaters, backpacks, lunch boxes, thermos, etc... Please label everything and anything sent to kindergarten.

**Shoes:** For safety reasons, we ask that all children wear shoes or tennis shoes to school. Sandals and "high heeled" shoes are not allowed.

**When your child is ill:** When your child is ill, please call the office and report your child's absence. All absences must be verified. If your child becomes sick or injured at school, he/she will be escorted to the clinic for treatment, and you or one of the names listed on the emergency card will be contacted. Please notify us **immediately** if any contact numbers change. It is important that you have filled in and returned all relevant medical documents to school, which outline any medical conditions or allergies your child may have.

If you are sending medicine to school, it must be taken to the nurse with an accompanying note outlining the dosage and correct times for administering the medicine.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick. This can be very distressing to the child.

## **Security and Safety:**

It is important for your child's teacher to know of any change in travel arrangements to and from school, in writing. We want to make sure that your child goes home with the right person.

All children should be walked to the kindergarten area. When you wish to pick up your child early, you need to take a paper from the reception area. Furthermore, you need to sign an exit book that all classrooms have for the safety of our students. There are staff duties outside each morning and during the recess breaks.

Parents are highly encouraged to collect their children promptly when the school finishes.  
**Unsupervised children will not be allowed to leave the premises.**

## **Behavior Management Procedures**

Gems Saudi International School aims to provide:

- A broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum which is continually improved, annually reviewed, and updated, and will equip students to pursue their higher education in any English or Arabic university.
- A safe, supportive, pleasant, and attractive learning environment.
- The necessary encouragement to work together with respect and tolerance, regardless of age, gender, race, or nationality as prescribed by our Quran and Hadith.

With the above in mind, here are some disciplinary guidelines for teachers, students, and parents:

For teachers:

- All teachers are expected to respect the school, their colleagues, and students.
- The dress code for teachers, as laid down by the management, must be followed strictly.
- Teachers must always be punctual.
- Leave of absence will only be granted in emergency situations.
- The use of foul and abusive language is not permitted.
- Physical violence is not acceptable and so is retaliation.
- Teachers should never encourage students to retaliate, even when confronted with the same.
- If the child in a class has a negative attitude towards another, it should be reported to a member of the administration, who in turn would deal with the matter.
- Every child in the school has a right to equal opportunities and it is up to each teacher to provide these opportunities in her classroom.
- In the classroom, teachers are expected to have predictable rules. While drawing up rules, ensure that:
  - rules are feasible

- reasonable and understood by all students
- consistent
- and rewarded when followed through.
  
- When rules are broken, teachers can use the following:
  - statement regarding which specific behavior is a problem
  - reason for the rule
  - and a suggestion of an alternative or appropriate behavior
  
- Some strategies that teachers could use to solve problems related to behavior:
  - active listening
  - negotiation
  - setting limits
  - affirmations
  
- When disciplining a child, it is important to remember the following:
  - age of the child
  - abilities of the child
  - what the child has done
  - not to insult a child physically or verbally.
  
- A pleasant disposition goes a long way in making your classroom an inviting place to be, so do wear a smile!

**For students:**

- All students are expected to respect their teachers, other adults, and fellow pupils.
- All students are expected to respect their own and other people's property and to take care of their books and equipment.
- Students are expected to be well behaved, well-mannered, and active.
- Students should walk, not run when moving around the school/department.
- Foul or abusive language is not allowed.
- Physical violence or retaliation is not allowed.
- Students are not permitted to bring any objects to school, especially sharp and dangerous instruments.
- Students are expected to be punctual.
- Students are required to wear the correct uniform. Hair attire should be simple and in school colors.

**For parents:**

- Explain school rules to their children.
- Recognize school policies.

- Understand that close partnership between parents, teachers and students is required.
- Attend Parents/ Teacher Meetings and discuss probable problems with teachers. Give suggestions for improvement.

Since Gems Saudi International School strongly believes in nurturing knowledge and educating students academically and how to cope in life, the Kindergarten Department have decided to format a behavioral strategy that is enforced in all classes to help in class management and ensure equality and fairness.

It is important for us to have some type of behavior plan so that children know what is expected of them in the classroom and at school. For any behavior management system to work, the students must know the rules and consequences ahead of time and know that the consequences will be consistently applied. Furthermore, it must be easy for the teacher to manage. Students will behave well if they know where they stand.

All teachers post their classroom rules **very largely** in the classroom – large enough to be seen from most parts of the room, chart paper-sized or larger. They can write the rules themselves, positively stated, or they can use this as a part of circle time and have mutually agreed upon rules. They need to use pictures for KG 1, KG 2 and KG3 students.

**Let your journey begin** 😊